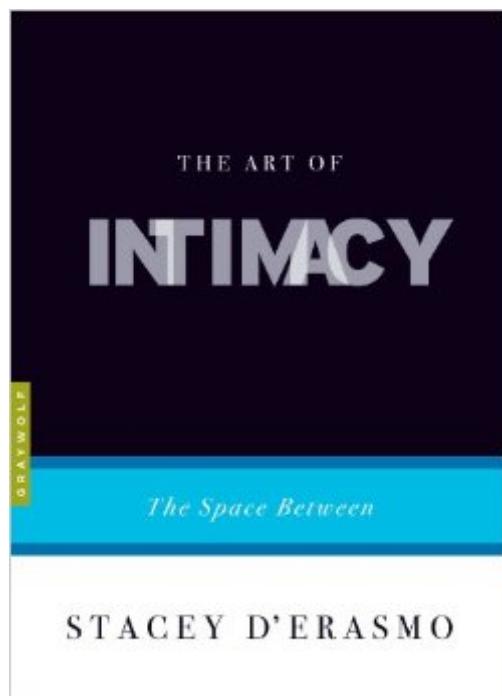


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The Art Of Intimacy: The Space Between



Synopsis

The first work of nonfiction by Stacey D'Erasmo, author of the New York Times Notable Books Tea and The Sky Below "What is the nature of intimacy, of what happens in the space between us? And how do we, as writers, catch or reflect it on the page?" Stacey D'Erasmo's insightful and illuminating study examines the craft and the contradictions of creating relationships not only between two lovers but also between friends, family members, acquaintances, and enemies in fiction. She argues for a more honest, more complex portrait of the true nature of the connections and missed connections among characters and, fascinatingly, between the writer and the reader. D'Erasmo takes us deep into the structure and grammar of these intimacies as they have been portrayed by such writers as Joan Didion, Toni Morrison, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and William Maxwell, and also by visual artists and filmmakers. She asks whether writing about intimacy is like staring straight into the sun, but it is her own brilliance that dazzles in the piercing and original book, *The Art of Intimacy*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Stacey d'Erasmo's book, *The Art of Intimacy: The Space Between* is a beautifully written and skillfully rendered meditation of what intimacy means in fiction. The study's subtitle is taken from a quote from Gertrude Stein, and reveals this book's focus: The text seeks to explore how we can explore that space between people, between reader and writer, and between book and reader, and

how these borders blur and intersect. The entire "Art of" series from Graywolf is a lovely and lasting contribution to our thinking on writing, and d'Erasmo's contribution is a really important addition to this series.

[This book will not tell you how to write intimate scenes, nor instruct you on what is a "successful" rendering of intimacy and what is not...Instead, we will venture together into a few of the meeting places, the spaces between, that have occurred in fiction."] pg. 12 I would say this book is trying to cover a "high concept writing approach", when exploring relationships between people. The examples offer metaphors and similes on the complexity of human relationships in a way that can easily make any writer look like an amateur. To pull it off successfully and not look completely pompous would be a real achievement. I was annoyed by the overuse of the word "Subjunctive", which I looked up on different sources only to find that it remained elusive and undefined. The book still offers interesting food for thought though and I'm glad I read it. The case is made that we can never truly know a character/person without their personal narrative, but we can learn a lot about the character narrating, by the way they view their relationship with that other character. If you like to read/write straight forward stories this book will probably annoy you. If you like to delve deep into philosophical questions and the human psyche at large, this book is perfect for you. I, myself, am somewhere in between.

This entry into the Art of ... series blows away other more shallow attempts at thinking about writing. The allegedly "two" bad reviews on this site are identical, word for word, from the same person, who ironically criticizes the editors of *On Intimacy* for missing a repeated paragraph. By doubling the count of that one comment, the site misrepresents the enjoyment history of the readers of this elegant look at intimacy. This slim volume epitomizes the experience Rilke describes, of loving the space between us that allows us to enjoy the silhouette of each other against the sky.

A useful book for working writers, though I found it somewhat more elliptical than Charles Baxter's "The Art of Subtext" from the same series (of which he is the editor). A bit harder to distill craft guidance from this one, though I enjoyed her voice and perspective in many ways and would certainly recommend the book.

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